/479 cont./

411 The Yamana has invented several missiles to overtake the various animals hunted, and each in its way is surprisingly efficient. He takes them along in his canoe wherever he goes and places them, ready for use, in the bow section where they stick out far above the bow. The first thing he does when game approaches is to choose the weapon suitable for it; afterwards he seizes whatever is nearest at hand, so as not to lose the booty. Aspinall:270 maintains "[the man in the canoe] three kinds of such spears with him." There are at least that many, and two or three of each kind. It is clear that the two-barbed javelin and the bird-spear with the serrated bone point have a variety of uses.

411 Every adult is capable of making and repairing
483 these weapons; they are indispensable to him for his livelihood. Not everyone, however, succeeds in
• 437 cutting out an even shaft from the main trunk of the
559 beech; individual men attain true mastery at this. That is why many a man will trade a good shaft for other things that he needs. Everyone always has a supply of loose points which he keeps in a longish leather pouch, yēnáko. Those few men who are able to make a perfectly shaped large harpoon point are
411 universally praised (186). In conclusion it should be

186. Descriptions of these missiles are to be found in Bove (c):128, Cojazzi:109, Dabbene (b):184, Hyades (b):23 and (q):302, 303, Lothrop (b):148, Martial:181, Spegazzini (a):143, Spencer:133, Weddell (a):94, and others.

Fig. 87.
Fish Spear.

/509 cont./

463 craftsmen who professionally produce a certain article for the rest of the population. No one need fear professional jealousy or unfair competition, because everyone works for his own needs. Obviously, the natural endowment and personal effort of individuals are very different, whereas the material used is generally always the same. Anyone who has a sense of beautiful form and who takes pleasure in a neatly made article sometimes attains great mastery in his work.

535 The Yamana have special expressions to characterize this ability in the various fields of daily activity. We have just mentioned the word yeténeshpo for a capable basket-weaver; wéléguchi (according to BD:815 "clever, expert, neat in work" /cited in English/) means one whose manual skill in general overshadows others; yéténém has the same meaning.

Thus a certain stamp of individual personality, at least of an individual method of work, without conscious intent, however, marks each object as the product of the person who made it. Of course, everyone recognizes his own product, and this is made even easier by the fact that the possessions of an individual are very limited. For a practiced eye the difference between two objects of a similar type is sometimes very great. Everyone evaluates things that are excellently made or that have turned out particularly well no less accurately than he does inadequate and shabby articles. People who work skillfully and produce good things are appreciated far and wide (228); on the basis of their

> 228. Despard (b):717 wrote: "The dextrous spear, paddle, and canoe-maker, is held in honour, and called yemh-mas-ca, a handyman" /cited in English/.

products, a father often spurs his son on to more exact and industrious handwork.

• 437 Personal excellence, as a result of which some person or other
463 is able to produce a certain article, brings about the transfer of certain items to other hands by way of barter. There is no getting around the fact that one person has more dexterity and skill for one thing and another person for some other thing. /[illegible] /Fig. 84 appears here./ Fitz-Roy (a):186 was very definitely made aware of

1: Gustafs--222 8-6 (1918-1924) 1927 5088 Talgan 5088

• 937
963

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321]

Fig. 84. Long Bone Points.

/510 cont./

this fact: "It is rather curious that usually each of these natives is trained to a particular pursuit: thus, one becomes an adept with the spear, another with the sling, another with a bow and arrows, but this excellence in one line does not hinder their attaining a considerable proficiency in all the others" /cited in English/. This is actually the case.

A person who lacks something that he is unable to make because of a shortage of raw material or as a result of his own incapacity acquires it through barter with someone who happens to be in a position to dispose of it. For example, only a few men are completely successful in cutting and filing the long bone harpoon points (Fig. 84), in putting an arrow together, or in removing a wide sheet of bark for canoe building. It is inevitable that the individual will sometimes become dependent on others to a certain extent when he must fill his need for certain implements. This considerably strengthens the awareness of the solidarity of all members of the tribe.

To begin with, however, scarcely anyone would think of using the object which he happens to have for purposes of barter, since in all his work and striving he is primarily and fundamentally concerned with his own needs. He uses his own measurements as a basis. That is to say, he decides on the length and

/510 cont./

437 443 breadth, the particular shape of the weapon or implement, in accordance with his own personal convenience, according to his bent and taste, depending on how he has practiced making it or is in the habit of doing it differently. From this arise the differences between the utensils of one man and another, between such small things as baskets, sewing work, and so forth, which one Indian woman or another will make for herself alone.

411 Because each weapon and each tool fits its maker's own hand, so to speak, it follows that each person has great dexterity in handling his own articles. /511/ Time and again their suppleness and accuracy of aim, their sure grip and controlled fist, their ability to make estimates, and their sharp eye have been justly regarded with awe and wonder by Europeans (226). It is true

226. Many agree with Bove's (g):235
judgment concerning their weapons,
that the Fuegians "know how to handle
them with marvelous dexterity and
precision" /translated from Italian/.

that with constant practice everyone can accomplish a great deal. Many a European who has tried to use the sling or the harpoon or some other native implement has gone about it very awkwardly and become the laughing mock of the Indians.

The fact that no one owns more than one extra utensil of those most frequently needed is an indication of self-confidence. The less a person must carry around with him on his constant travels, the more comfortable it is for him and the freer he feels. It is only when want and need force him to restore the loss of an implement that he instantly and decisively sets to work. Since not even the thought of his own needs forces our Indian to make this or that object in order to have it on hand, how much less can we expect him to make anything for barter.

182 Our Fuegians procure and make their implements with little effort. They manipulate them very adroitly and steadily. They can depend absolutely on their own ability and the effectiveness of their weapons (227). What, therefore, should press and drive

227. Every careful observer will agree

/978 cont./

●437 Although by and large every adult is able to make for himself the articles necessary for his way of life, nevertheless he obtains all kinds of things through barter. We mean by this the arrangement whereby, upon mutual agreement, one object is put up for another and the owners make an exchange. Our Indians lack [436] real media of exchange, such as money, shells, and the like, but they put a lower or higher value on each object, to which they decisively refer during the exchange. The value of a thing in- [435] creases if it is naturally beautiful, for example, in the case of an otter skin, or if it is carefully made and reliable in use, for instance, a long harpoon point, and finally in relation to the difficulty with which it was obtained, as in the case of soft pieces of guanaco leather. If a person wants an object, the owner evaluates it and compares it with the merit of the thing the other person offers in exchange. They try to make up for the lack of merit of one object as against another by increasing the quantity. The [804] Indians are unfamiliar with weights as measures. If both parties have agreed on the equivalence of the objects to be bartered, they make the exchange.

There are several expressions in the Yamana language from 437 which we may clearly recognize the customs involved in barter as 439 described above. For example, BD:307 gives matẽxgãmatapai, "to make mutually an exchange with each other" /cited in English/; likewise, matẽxgãmata, "a thing (things) given in exchange" /cited in English/. Earlier observers were convinced that there was lively barter among our Yamana (390). Darwin (d):261 wrote:

> 390. Cooper:179 is correct in his summary: "Barter between the Fuegians and the whites, between the three Fuegian tribes, and between members of the same tribe is a common feature of Fuegian life" /cited in English/.

"Several of the Fuegians definitely proved that they had a good idea of barter. I gave a man a large nail, without making any kind of sign that I expected a return gift. He immediately picked out two fish and handed them to me on the tip of his spear. Whenever there was a gift meant for a canoe and it was dropped

/978 cont./

437 439 near someone else, it was always given to the rightful owner." This last statement confirms what was mentioned above, namely, that no one keeps for himself something that belongs to another. "Strange to say," Snow (b):262 confessed, "I found all of the Fuegians I met very honest in barter" /cited in English/. In addition, we quote Lovisato's (b):140 testimony: "The Yahgan seemed to us to be quite familiar with barter... Upon receiving from us a piece of bread or any article whatsoever, they immediately offered some fish strung on a stick or some crabs" /translated from Italian/. The natives evaluated the merit of the object given them and in return gave something comparable (391).

> 391. Unfortunately some Europeans consciously or unconsciously disregarded this point of view of the natives. Hyades (q): 243 also complains about this: "It often resulted in misunderstandings with strangers who planned to buy weapons and skins for furs in exchange for an insignificant trifle, while the Fuegians thought they themselves had made a gift which was not repaid in subsequent meetings" /translated from French/. Having grown wiser by many disappointments, the Indians use a well-known trick which Martial:204 clearly describes: "The seller never parted with the object that he wished to exchange until he had received the price, and when he had several objects he was very careful to show them successively, so as not to decrease the value of his goods" /translated from French/.

/979/ Since Europeans have dominated the Cape Horn Archipelago, our natives have also bartered with them, above all with the missionaries. How actively barter was sometimes carried on was described by Bridges on April 21, 1875, as follows: "There is no market in Fireland. The natives covet our food, clothing, and goods. Women, one after another, bring bundles of small fish for sale. One wants in exchange much biscuit, another a comb, another a handkerchief, another sugar, etc., others bring crabs and

/979 cont./

437 439 others shellfish, and oftentimes there is such a flow that we must stop and refuse...Many come with baskets, spears, shafts, fish-lines, eggs, shells, and curios of every imaginable kind, -- stones, seals' teeth, birds' claws, feather headbands, clays, fungi, seeds, etc. -- wanting every description of goods in return" /cited in English/ (MM:IX, 217; 1875).

437 One is justified in assuming that the Yamana greatly enjoy exchanging their articles and, indeed, for the sheer pleasure of having something in return as soon as possible. Bridges (ibid.) is also of the opinion that "the natives are always buying and selling, exchanging canoes and everything" /cited in English/. He also adds: "Their manner of doing so is very unsatisfactory" /cited in English/. True, to a certain extent everyone concerned with barter evaluates the articles to be exchanged, but they lack unequivocal measures of value, such as money, and hasty arbitrariness is unavoidable (392). Thus serious unpleasantness sometimes results from an exchange.

392. On April 21, 1875, Bridges mentioned an incident "that occurred a few days ago. Palahlian, a man about thirty-eight, has three wives and three little children, and had a good canoe. Another man, a visitor here, not living with Palahlian, intends to give his canoe to Palahlian. Palahlian does not wish it, and hears of it indirectly, and is troubled what to give in return. He told me all about it. Palahlian at length is told that such and such a canoe is his, not, however, by the giver. Palahlian then seeks him, and gives him a large axe, well handled. Thus there is no mutual agreement previously made, and most of their transactions are performed in this loose manner" /cited in English/ (MM:IX, 218;1875).

426 Our Yamana practice lending less frequently, but sometimes they find themselves forced to resort to it because of need and unforeseen requirements. Almost always only articles that someone

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH6 Yahgan SH6

clubs, flats, and so forth were used freely, with no holds barred, but grave wounds or deaths were uncommon. Organized warfare did not exist, and the *Yahgan* had no defensive weapons. The weapons used in their feuds were primarily made for, and adapted to, hunting.

Social relations within and between the dialectic and local groups appear to have been normally ironic, but violence and bloodshed were not infrequent. The friends of fighting parties usually intervened, both by persuasion and by force, to restore peace. A murder was strongly condemned, and the murderer often became an outcast. Bridges found 29 cases of homicide between 1871 and 1884—an annual rate per population something like 10 times as high as that of the United States. Mercy killings occurred for the purpose of putting an end to the sufferings of the hopelessly ill. Human sacrifice was unknown; so too was premeditated suicide.

The evidence that the *Yahgan* practised no form of cannibalism—gastronomic, famine, ritual, or other—is convincing beyond all reasonable doubt. They would not even eat animals suspected of devouring human flesh.

RUDIMENTARY LAW

Ownership.—The *Yahgan* resented and avenged exploitative trespass upon their tribal territory or attempted occupation of any part thereof by non-*Yahgan*, Indian or White. So, too, did members of any one of the five dialectic groups (Gusinde, 1937, pp. 964-965) or, according to Koppers (1930 b, p. 176), of any one of the numerous local groups, by nonmembers. Since these local groups seemingly were chiefly kinship groups (cf. *supra*, Political Life), the *Yahgan* land-tenure system resembled the family-hunting-ground system. There was no exclusive tenure by kinship circles as such, by biological families, or by individuals.

Members of one dialectic or local group could, however, exploit the territory of other groups to secure food in grave shortage, to feast on a stranded whale, and to gather firestones and suitable canoe bark, which were found only in certain parts of the *Yahgan* territory. Ownership of personal property, such as weapons, clothing, adornments, and baskets, was vested in the individual. Women and children, as well as men, had well-recognized rights to such things. The ownership of certain other things—food, hut, canoe—appears to have been vested in the biological family.

Food was looked upon as the property and gift of the Supreme Being; wasting it was disrespectful to Him.

Title to personal property was acquired through occupation, labor, donation, and barter. Barter took two forms: plain, or exchange of goods for goods; and by exchange of presents. There was no cur-

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 3316 Yahgan 3315

money of any kind, and no weights or measures. Barter was carried on among the *Yahgan* themselves, with the *Ona* and *Alacaluf*, and with the Whites. Barter by exchange of presents was common; a gift was made, regardless often of the wishes of the recipient, who could not refuse it without affronting the giver, and who was definitely expected to give something in return.

Inheritance played a very minor rule. Much or most of the deceased's property was burnt with the body. The person's dog fell to the oldest son or other near relative or acquaintance. Some of the more valuable or useful property might be bartered or given away to distant persons. Such burning, bartering, and giving away were intended to take from sight what would cause sorrow to the survivors by reminding them of the beloved departed, and to signify the survivors' desire not to profit by the death.

Stealing was considered decidedly reprehensible; but thefts actually occurred, even among their own people, not as daily matters, so to speak, but it would seem, not very uncommonly. A habitual thief, who failed to reform, was in the end boycotted—a severe punishment under *Yahgan* living conditions.

Generous sharing of food with kin and friends was the rule. Hospitality was extended as a matter of course.

Labor.—Neither wage nor slave labor existed. There was a little, but not much, labor in common. Each family was a relatively independent economic unit. The division of labor was almost exclusively a sexual one, with no organized or unorganized craftsmen making their living by specialized trades.

The man's task was to hunt marine mammals, otter, guanaco, and birds, to make his own weapons, to build and repair the canoe, to do the harder work in hut building. The woman's task was to care for the younger children, to cook, tend the fire and look after the hut generally, to paddle and have general management of the canoe in which the family spent so much of its time, to do all the skinwork and leatherwork, such as preparing skins, sewing clothing, and making skin bags and pouches, to make baskets, and, last but not least, to collect mussels, much of the fish and other sea food, eggs, fungi, and berries. Since mussels were the chief food resource, the woman's part as provider was an extremely important one.

Probably her crucial role as food provider had a good deal to do with her relatively high status in *Yahgan* society. Certain tasks fell to man and woman jointly, such as building the hut, and hunting from the canoe, when the man did the killing while the woman maneuvered the craft. All in all, if we take into account *Yahgan* living conditions, although the list of women's tasks is longer than that of the men's, actually the sexual division of labor appears to have been a fairly equitable one.